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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/747,908	12/22/2000	William Marcial	17837-00002	4443

7590

11/16/2005

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EXAMINER

MCALLISTER, STEVEN B

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3627

DATE MAILED: 11/16/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/747,908

Applicant(s)

MARCIAL ET AL.

Examiner

Steven B. McAllister

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 July 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 24-73 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 24-73 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

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DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 24-73 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 24 and 32 recite reconciling an account variance by “displaying a data entry table on the subsidiary computer to prompt ...” and “displaying on the subsidiary computer guidelines...” However, as understood by the examiner, the act of displaying a data entry data and guidelines does not constitute reconciling.

Also, claims 24 and 32 are indefinite because “that may not have been included” is indefinite.

Claim 70 recites reconciling an account variance by “prompting the user...” However, as understood by the examiner, the act of prompting the user to perform an action does not constitute reconciling.

Note Regarding Examination

It is noted that the claims recite a database *for* [emphasis added] storing specific information, and a server *configured* [emphasis added] to perform certain actions. However, these clauses are interpreted as intended use only since any database is

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capable of storing any information and any server generally configured is capable of performing the recited steps.

It is further noted that recitations of a "database storing ..." the information and a server "having software (or a program, etc.) stored on a tangible medium, said software being operative to cause the server to..." would positively recite the intended elements and require any combination of references to show a server performing those steps.

In order to promote compact prosecution, the claims are treated below (103 rejection) as if the additional elements further limited the apparatus.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 24-73 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Brown (6,532,450).

As to claim 24, Brown discloses an account reconciliation system that utilizes a remote computer associated with a subsidiary (see e.g., Figure 2; 62; Fig. 1; 20, 22; col. 3, lines 52-65), a remote computer associated with the parent (it is noted that as broadly claimed, the col. 3 shows that a computer is associated with at least another

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division and therefore is associated with the parent); a centralized database (see Figure 2, 60); and a server associated with the parent (since it is associated with at least a division which is associated with the parent – e.g., col. 3, lines 52-65, Fig. 1; 18) capable of performing all recited steps.

As to claims 32 and 70, Brown discloses an account reconciliation system that utilizes a subsidiary client sub-system comprising a browser; a remote computer associated with the parent (it is noted that as broadly claimed, the col. 3 shows that a computer is associated with at least another division and therefore is associated with the parent); a data storage device capable of storing all recited information (see Figure 2, 60); and a server sub-system associated with the parent (since it is associated with at least a division which is associated with the parent – e.g., col. 3, lines 52-65, Fig. 1; 18) capable of performing all recited steps.

As to claims 35-31, 33-69 and 71-73, it is noted that Brown shows all elements.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 24-34, 37-48, 50-60, and 62-73 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brown in view of the well known prior art.

As to claim 24, Brown discloses an account reconciliation system that utilizes a remote computer associated with a subsidiary (see e.g., Figure 2; 62; Fig. 1; 20, 22; col. 3, lines 52-65), a remote computer associated with the parent (it is noted that as broadly claimed, the col. 3 shows that a computer is associated with at least another division and therefore is associated with the parent); a centralized database (see Figure 2, 60); and a server associated with the parent (since it is associated with at least a division which is associated with the parent – e.g., col. 3, lines 52-65, Fig. 1; 18) configured for receiving data from the other computers, calculating and reporting a variance to a user, reconciling, and updating a variance over a network (see e.g., Figure 2, 42). Brown further shows a network connecting the server to the computers (see col. 5, lines 2-5), and a user interface allowing a requester to input account information and to receive account variance output (see col. 15, lines 1-2).

Brown does not explicitly show that the reconciliation is between the parent and subsidiary; displaying a data entry table on the subsidiary computer; displaying on the subsidiary computer guidelines of at least one of the claimed types; or automatically comparing the additional entries to that stored in the database to determine whether it is duplicative.

However, the examiner takes official notice that to provide a server capable of performing these steps is notoriously old and well known in the art. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the apparatus of Brown by providing a server configured to perform these steps in order to ensure that the consolidated

balance sheets are correct, to ease data entry by providing a structured table and by providing guidance; and in order to avoid calculation errors by double-counting data.

As to **[claim 25]** said server is further configured to automatically submit the account information to an account tracking application (see paragraph bridging col. 14-15).

As to **[claim 26]** said server (42) is configured to receive information by at least one of the Internet (see col. 5, lines 2-5), an intranet, a wide area network and a local area network.

As to **[claim 27]** said server is configured to receive account balance information (see example in col. 15, lines 22-35).

As to **[claim 30]** said server is configured to calculate an account variance using a pre-defined algorithm (see col. 15, lines 20-22).

As to **[claim 31]** said server is configured to receive and store reconciliation information (see col. 15, lines 20-22).

Regarding claim 32, Brown et al discloses all elements noted above. It also shows a network-based system (see col. 5, lines 2-5) for managing accounts reconciliation (see paragraph bridging col. 14-15), said system comprising: a client sub-system comprising a browser (inherent in viewing the Web), a data storage device for storing information; a server sub-system configured to be coupled to said client sub-system and said database (via 60), said server sub-system further configured to: access

an account reconciliation system after logging onto the system with a user identification and a password (see paragraph bridging col. 14-15)., receive an account information from a centralized database (via 60); and submit accounting entries to balance the account based on the received account information to the centralized database to reconcile account variances (see step 616; col. 15, lines 1 1-14).

Brown does not explicitly show that the reconciliation is between the parent and subsidiary; displaying a data entry table on the subsidiary computer; displaying on the subsidiary computer guidelines of at least one of the claimed types; or automatically comparing the additional entries to that stored in the database to determine whether it is duplicative.

However, the examiner takes official notice that to provide a server capable of performing these steps is notoriously old and well known in the art. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the apparatus of Brown by providing a server configured to perform these steps in order to ensure that the consolidated balance sheets are correct, to ease data entry by providing a structured table and by providing guidance; and in order to avoid calculation errors by double-counting data.

As to **[claim 33]** said client sub-system is further configured with: a displaying component to display available options to the user (via a monitor); and a sending component to send an inquiry to the server sub-system so that the server sub-system can process and download the requested information to the client sub-system (see col. 156, lines 1-3).

As to **[claim 34]** the sending component functions in response to a click of a mouse button (inherent input device).

As to **[claim 37]** said server subsystem is further configured with: a collection component for collecting information from users into the centralized database (via 60); a tracking component for tracking information on an on-going basis; a displaying component for displaying information; a receiving component for receiving an inquiry from the client sub system (via a monitor); and an accessing component for accessing the centralized database and causing the retrieved information to be displayed on the client sub-system (see col. 15, lines 1-3).

As to **[claim 38]** said server subsystem further configured with a receiving component for receiving an inquiry to provide information from one of a plurality of users (see col. 15, lines 1-3).

As to **[claim 39]** said server subsystem further configured with a processing component for searching and processing received inquiries against the data storage device containing a variety of information collected by the collection component (via server 42).

As to **[claim 40]** said server subsystem further configured with a retrieving component to retrieve information from the data storage device (via 60).

As to **[claim 41]** said server subsystem further configured with an information fulfillment component that downloads the requested information after receiving from the database to the plurality of users in the order in which the requests were received by the receiving component (see col. 15, lines 1-3).

As to **[claim 42]** said server subsystem further configured to print requested information (see col. 15, lines 19-20, "hard copy").

As to **[claim 43]** said server subsystem further configured to accept an inquiry from a user (see col. 15, lines 1-3).

As to **[claims 44, 45]** said server subsystem further configured to: display information on the client sub-system; and receive an inquiry from the client sub-system (see col. 15, lines 1-3).

As to **[claim 46]** said server subsystem further configured to: track information on a real time basis', and store information on a real time basis by adding new information to the centralized database on a real time basis to provide up-to date information instantaneously to the user upon a request (information is tracked and stored as soon as it is received).

As to **[claim 47]** said server subsystem further configured to receive information entered on-line (see col. 5, lines 2-5).

As to **[claim 48]** said server subsystem further configured to receive information entered through at least one of a voice activation command and a device connected to the client sub-system (see keyboard in Fig. 2).

As to **[claim 50]** said server subsystem further configured to display an HTML document downloaded by the server sub-system (see col. 5, lines 2-10).

As to **[claim 51]** said server subsystem further configured to display at least one alternative out of various alternatives available to the user (it is inherent that the user be given at least one alternative).

As to **[claim 52]** said server subsystem further configured to receive an account information further comprises the step of displaying at least one of a BSLA, an affiliate BSLA, an Account Number, a Description of the Account (see col. 8, lines 58-67), a Treasury Balance indicating the treasury balance booked by a parent corporation, a Business Balance indicating the amount booked by a subsidiary of the parent corporation, a Contact Name of the BSLA selected, a Contact Phone Number of the contact name, a Fiscal Month, a start date of the fiscal month, and an end date of the fiscal month.

As to **[claim 53]** said server subsystem further configured to receive an account information further comprises the step of receiving a variance amount between a business balance and a treasury balance (see col. 15, lines 20-22).

As to **[claim 54]** said server subsystem further configured to receive an account information further comprises the 'steps of: display at least one row to enter information; and display at least one column to allow a user to input at least one of a dollar amount Booked by Business (see col. 8, lines 58-67), a dollar amount Booked by Treasury, a Currency Code, a Conversion Rate, a Description, a date of transaction, an amount identified in Treasury Journal, a Treasury Source relating to the treasury journal, a code for an Office and a Legal Entity.

As to **[claim 55]** said server subsystem further configured to: enter against an account identifier (see col. 8, lines 58-67) at least one of a dollar amount Booked by Business, a dollar amount Booked by Treasury, a Currency Code, a Conversion Rate, a Description, a date of transaction, an amount identified in Treasury Journal, a Treasury

Source relating to the treasury journal, a code for an Office and a Legal Entity; and store against the account identifier at least one of a dollar amount Booked by Business, a dollar amount Booked by Treasury, a Currency Code, a Conversion Rate, a Description, a date of transaction, an amount identified in Treasury Journal. a Treasury Source relating to the treasury journal, a code for an Office and a Legal Entity.

As to **[claim 56]** said server subsystem further configured to: compute a new account variance between a business balance and a treasury balance; download the new account variance (see col. 15, lines 30-35); and display the new account variance.

As to **[claim 57]** said server subsystem further configured to generate account reconciliation information in a variety of reporting formats (see col. 15, lines 18-20).

As to **[claim 58]** said server subsystem further configured to: download requested information from said server sub-system; and display requested information on said client sub-system in response to the inquiry (via monitor).

As to **[claim 59]** said server subsystem further configured to print requested information (see col. 15, lines 18-20).

As to **[claim 60]** said server subsystem further configured to: receive an inquiry from a user (see col. 15, lines 1-3), accept the inquiry from a user; and deliver information to the user in response to the inquiry.

As to **[claim 62]** said server subsystem further configured to display an HTML document downloaded by said server sub-system (see col. 5, lines 2-10).

As to **[claim 63]** said server subsystem further configured to display at least one alternative from various alternatives available to the user (inherent).

As to **[claim 64]** said server subsystem further configured to: access the centralized database (via 60); search the database regarding the specific inquiry; retrieve information from the database; and transmit the retrieved information to the client system for display by the client system.

As to **[claim 65]** said server subsystem further configured to select one of a method for submitting accounting entries out of at least an Enter Cash Account Reconciliation and a Down/up Load Cash Account Reconciliation (see paragraph bridging col. 14-15).

As to **[claim 66]** said server subsystem further configured to: enter a user input against an account identifier at least one of a dollar amount Booked by Business (see col. 8, lines 58-67), a dollar amount Booked by Treasury, a Currency Code, a Conversion Rate, a Description, a date of transaction, an amount identified in Treasury Journal, a Treasury Source relating to the treasury journal, a code for an Office and a Legal Entity; store the user input against the account identifier at least one of a dollar amount Booked by Business, a dollar amount Booked by Treasury, a Currency Code, a Conversion Rate, a Description, a date of transaction, an amount identified in Treasury Journal, a Treasury Source relating to the treasury journal, a code for an Office and a Legal Entity; upload the user input to update the account information; and compute new account variance between a business balance and a treasury balance.

As to **[claim 67]** said server subsystem further configured to: create required files associated with the account; display against an account identifier (see col. 8, lines 58-67), at least one of a BSLA, an affiliate BSLA, an Account Number, a Description of the

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Account, a Treasury Balance indicating the treasury balance booked by a parent corporation, a Business Balance indicating the amount booked by a subsidiary of the parent corporation, a Contact Name of the BSLA selected, a Contact Phone Number of the contact name, a Fiscal Month, a start date of the fiscal month, and an end date of the fiscal month; display at least one column to allow a user to input at least one of a dollar amount Booked by Business, a dollar amount Booked by Treasury, a Currency Code, a Conversion Rate, a Description, a date of transaction, an amount identified in Treasury Journal, a Treasury Source relating to the treasury journal, a code for an Office and a A Legal Entity; accept a user input against the account identifier and at least one of a dollar amount Booked by Business, a dollar amount Booked by Treasury, a Currency Code, a Conversion Rate, a Description, a date of transaction, an amount identified in Treasury Journal, a Treasury Source relating to the treasury journal, a code for an Office and a Legal Entity; and store the user input against the account identifier and at least one of a dollar amount Booked by Business, a dollar amount Booked by Treasury, a Currency Code, a Conversion Rate, a Description, a date of transaction, an amount identified in Treasury Journal, a Treasury Source relating to the treasury journal, a code for an Office and a Legal Entity.

As to **[claim 68]** said server subsystem further configured to: upload the user input to update the account information; and compute a new account variance between a business balance and a treasury balance (see col. 15, lines 20-22).

As to **[claim 69]** said server subsystem further configured to connect to the client sub-system via a network and wherein the network is one of a wide area network, a local area network, an intranet and the Internet (see col. 5, lines 2-5).

Regarding claim 70, Brown et al. disclose all elements discussed above. Brown et al show a network based account reconciliation system coupled to a centralized database (via 60), said system comprising: a client sub-system including a browser; a data storage device for storing information; a server sub-system (42) configured to be coupled to said client sub-system and said database, said server sub-system further configured to: receive an account information (see col. 8, lines 58-67); analyze accounting entries relating to the account based on the account information; compute the account variance by comparing the received account information against the account information stored in said centralized database (see col. 15, lines 20-22); report the account variance to a user in response to an inquiry (see col. 15, lines 18-20); and prompt the user for additional accounting information.

Brown does not explicitly show that the reconciliation is between the parent and subsidiary; or automatically comparing the additional entries to that stored in the database to determine whether it is duplicative.

However, the examiner takes official notice that to provide a server capable of performing these steps is notoriously old and well known in the art. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the apparatus of Brown by providing

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a server configured to perform these steps in order to ensure that the consolidated balance sheets are correct, and in order to avoid calculation errors by double-counting data.

Alternatively, Brown shows all elements except that the reconciliation is between the parent and subsidiary; prompting the user associated with the subsidiary to enter additional accounting entries; or automatically comparing the additional entries to that stored in the database to determine whether it is duplicative.

However, the examiner takes official notice that to provide a server capable of performing these steps is notoriously old and well known in the art. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the apparatus of Brown by providing a server configured to perform these steps in order to ensure that the consolidated balance sheets are correct, to facilitate reconciliation by instructing the user to provide needed information; and in order to avoid calculation errors by double-counting data.

As to **[claim 71]** said server subsystem further configured to submit the account information to an account tracking application (via 14 and 22).

As to **[claim 72]** said server subsystem further configured to receive and store at least one of a user's account balance information and reconciliation information (see paragraph bridging col. 14-15).

As to **[claim 73]** said server subsystem further configured to receive the account information via at least one of an intranet, the Internet, a local area network, and a wide area network (see column 5, lines 2-5).

Claims 28, 29, and 36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brown in view of well known prior art as applied to claim 1 and 32 above, and further in view of Hollander.

Brown in view of the well known prior art disclose all the claimed limitations as set forth above but fail to expressly disclose the use of access controls to restrict unauthorized access to accounting systems.

Regarding claims 28, 29 and 32-69, Hollander discloses accounting information systems and the use of access controls to restrict unauthorized access to the systems (see pages 463-464).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify Brown with the access control taught by Hollander, because accounting data is sensitive information that is most accurate when protected from authorized tampering.

Claim 35 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brown in view of the well known prior art as applied to claims 24-34, 37-48, 50-60, 62-73 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,625,617 (hereinafter Yarnall").

Brown in view of the well known prior art fails to expressly disclose the use of a voice command input of data.

Yarnall et al. teaches the use of accounting system that allows users to input data via voice command (see column 14, lines 26-28).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Brown with a voice command input device as taught by Yarnall, because voice command input devices allow users that are incapable of using physical input devices such as a keyboard or mouse with the ability to input information.

Claims 49 and 61 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brown in view of the well known prior art as applied to claims 24-34, 37-48, 50-60, 62-73 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,249,770 (hereinafter "Erwin").

Brown in view of the well known prior art fails to expressly disclose a server subsystem configured to submit a request through pull down menus.

Erwin teaches the use of an financial system that utilizes pull-down menus to input information (see column 9, lines 17-18).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify Brown with pull-down menus as taught by Erwin,

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because pull-down menus provide a friendly to use graphical user interface for the input of information.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to the claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Steven B. McAllister whose telephone number is (703) 308-7052. The examiner can normally be reached on M-Th 8-6:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robert P. Olszewski can be reached on (703) 308-5183. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Steven B. McAllister

Steven B. McAllister
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3627

STEVE B. MCALLISTER
PRIMARY EXAMINER